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Does the Amount of Time Mothers Spend With Children or Adolescents Matter?

Although intensive mothering ideology underscores the irreplaceable nature of mothers' time for children's optimal development, empirical testing of this assumption is scant. Using time diary and survey data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement, the authors examined how the amount of time mothers spent with children ages 3–11 (N = 1,605) and adolescents 12–18 (N = 778) related to offspring behavioral, emotional, and academic outcomes and adolescent risky behavior. Both time mothers spent engaged with and accessible to offspring were assessed. In childhood and adolescence, the amount of maternal time did not matter for offspring behaviors, emotions, or academics, whereas social status factors were important. For adolescents, more engaged maternal time was related to fewer delinquent behaviors, and engaged time with parents together was related to better outcomes. Overall, the amount of mothers' time mattered in nuanced ways, and, unexpectedly, only in adolescence.

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Does the amount of time children spend with their mothers matter for children's developmental outcomes? The answer, by all accounts, should be yes, according to current beliefs about optimal childrearing methods in the United States: Mothers' time is *thought* to be especially important, even irreplaceable, for the well-being of children (Hays, 1996; Warner, 2006). Indeed, this ideology of intensive mothering—the belief that the proper development of children requires mothers lavishing large amounts of time and energy on offspring (Hays, 1996)—is pervasive in American culture, is central to the spirited debates over whether maternal employment harms children (Bianchi, 2000), and is embodied in the "Mommy Wars," an alleged dispute between homemaker and employed mothers in which the former are said to accuse the latter of being selfish and harming children by being away from home too often (Hays, 1996).

Yet some scholars question the sacrosanctity of mothers' time for the well-being of children. Presser (1995) called the belief that mothers' time is more important than fathers' a "double standard of parenthood" and asserted

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that "there is little empirical justification to support this view" (p. 300). Indeed, most studies that have attempted to assess the whole of mothers' time investments in children have not done so directly; they either used indirect measures of mothers' time (e.g., mothers' paid work hours or hours of nonmaternal care) or examined mothers' participation in certain activities (e.g., reading, eating meals, talking) with children (Sénéchal & Lefevre, 2002; Weinstein, 2005). Few studies have examined whether the total quantity of time mothers spend with their children relates to children's developmental outcomes such as behavior, emotions, and academic performance. Thus, in part because of a paucity of refined empirical data, our understanding of how the quantity of mother–child time relates to offspring development is underdeveloped.

We examined whether the amount of time children spent with their mothers was positively associated with key facets of offspring development—behavioral and emotional health and academic performance—by analyzing time diary and survey data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement (PSID-CDS; https://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/Guide/FAQ.aspx?Type=2) in 1997 and 2002. We assessed two types of maternal time that are prominent in public and scholarly debates: (a) *accessible time*, or the total amount of time the focal child spent with the mother present but not directly participating in activities with mother, and (b) *engaged time*, or the total amount of time the focal child spent participating in activities with mother (Folbre, Yoon, Finnoff, & Fuligni, 2005; Larson & Richards, 1994). Because the importance of maternal time may depend on a child's age, we examined the two developmental stages of childhood and adolescence. To address the question of the sacredness of maternal time, we examined whether the amount of time spent with father (but not mother) and time with both parents jointly (parent time) were related to child and adolescent development. We also assessed the importance of maternal time for offspring outcomes relative to social status resources, such as family income and education. By using data that directly measured mothers' time with children, this study advances our understanding of how the quantity of mother–child time relates to children's and adolescents' developmental outcomes.

Background

Maternal Time Investments as Sacred: The Culture of Intensive Mothering

Ideas about childrearing are socially constructed, varying according to the culture and organization of the society (Hays, 1996). In the United States today, cultural beliefs about childrearing center on the near-sacredness of mothers for children. Mothers' time with children is widely thought to be unique and irreplaceable, because they are purportedly more sensitive to children's needs and more selfless in caring for offspring. The ideology implicitly suggests that children's time with mothers is more important than time spent with any other adult (Blair-Loy, 2003; Hays, 1996; Liss, Schiffrin, Mackintosh, Miles-McLean, & Erchull, 2013).

Mothers clearly do not easily live up to the expectations of intensive mothering (Christopher, 2012); attempts to do so are exhausting and stressful for them (B. Fox, 2009; Rizzo, Schiffrin, & Liss, 2013; Wall, 2010). In particular, employed mothers have a difficult time reaching this ideal (Blair-Loy, 2003; Christopher, 2012; Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004). Even though mothers spend more time engaged with children today than they did in the 1970s, despite the fact that now they are more likely to be employed outside the home (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; L. Fox, Han, & Waldfogel, 2013; Moro-Egido, 2012), pressure to spend time with children makes many mothers feel strained (Milkie et al., 2004; Snyder, 2007), leading to negative consequences for mothers' general well-being (B. Fox, 2009; Nomaguchi, Milkie, & Bianchi, 2005).

Despite the implications for mothers and scholarly assertions about the theoretical importance of maternal time (Folbre et al., 2005; Larson & Richards, 1994), the empirical question of whether more mother time is necessarily better for children remains unresolved (Presser, 1995). In this study, we examined how the total amount of maternal time (exclusive of father's presence) related to offspring developmental outcomes. By conceptualizing time in terms of quantity rather than quality or nature, we were able to analyze main tenets of intensive mothering ideology: that more mother–child time is beneficial for children's outcomes and that mothers' time is uniquely important for children.

Accessible Versus Engaged Time

Theoretically, the amount of time mothers spend with children may be important for children's developmental outcomes in two key forms: (a) "being there" and (b) being directly engaged in activities with children. Some researchers have emphasized the importance of mothers' being accessible or present for children's development. Mothers' accessibility enhances the ability to supervise their children, a factor that, as social control theory posits, is critical for protecting children from risk-taking behaviors (Barnes & Farrell, 1992; Longmore, Eng, Giordano, & Manning, 2009) and promoting children's academic achievement (Amato & Fowler, 2002). "Being there" is also a key cultural marker for good mothering (Garey, 1999). Accessibility to mothers is thought to ensure that children can receive a hug, reassurance, or answers to questions because the mother is available to be called on: a situation purported to provide a child with a unique type of security (Hays, 1996; Kurz, 2000, 2006; Snyder, 2007). However, few scholars have examined precise measures of mothers' "being there" and how it is related to child outcomes.

Other researchers have emphasized the importance of mothers' direct engagement for children's developmental outcomes. Engaged time, or focused time in shared activities, may provide the opportunity for transmitting love, nurturance, and values from mother to child; teaching children special tasks; and helping children develop skills and learn lessons (Larson & Richards, 1994), all of which are known to promote better self-perceptions and higher achievement motivation, as suggested by social learning and social control theories (Eccles, 1992; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). Most pertinent studies have focused on the amount of time mothers spend with children in specific types of activities (e.g., reading, outdoor play, or watching television) and thus have not completely captured the question of whether more of mothers' engaged time with children is better for children's outcomes. Bianchi (2000) implicitly suggested that mothers' engaged, but not accessible, time may matter for child outcomes, and this may be the key to understanding why the effect of maternal employment on children's outcomes seems to be negligible; that is, employment may reduce mothers' accessible time but be less consequential for their time directly interacting with their children; a recent empirical study suggested that this was indeed the case (Moro-Egido, 2012). Bianchi (2000) did not empirically test the idea that engaged but not accessible time is related to child outcomes, however.

Skepticism About the Efficacy of Maternal Time

Some scholars are skeptical about the assumption that more of mother's time is inherently beneficial to children. As noted earlier, Presser (1995) argued that little empirical research has tested this assumption. Hays (1996), while introducing the term *intensive mothering*, called into question the efficacy of mothers' time, and argued that the ideology of intensive mothering serves the interests of the most powerful, "namely men, whites, the upper classes, capitalist owners and state leaders" (p. 162) by having individual mothers devoted to rearing well-educated, disciplined, and healthy children while not competing much in the workplace themselves and doing work in the home that frees up men's time. Huston and Aronson (2005) argued that family and maternal characteristics, such as education, play a more important role than maternal time investments for infant development, based on diary data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Early Child Care and Youth Development Study. They showed little association between maternal time and infant cognitive and behavioral outcomes. Some mothers, too, have questioned the efficacy of intensive mothering (Wall, 2010). Christopher (2012) argued that employed mothers reshape intensive mothering ideologies into that of *extensive mothering*, or being responsible for children's well-being but without directly "being there" with children many hours a day, thus casting doubt on the belief that more maternal time is better.

In fact, much research documents that child development is influenced by other factors, such as income or poverty, parental education, and family structure. Children living in poverty are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems and to perform poorly in school (McLeod & Nonnemaker, 2000). Parental education is strongly related to the frequency with which children engage in certain human capital-building activities, such as reading and studying (Bianchi & Robinson, 1997; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). Children

living in two-biological-parent families better academic, behavioral, and emotional well-being than children living in other family forms (Brown, 2010). Compared to these social status factors, maternal time may not be as important in relation to child development.

Does More Mother Time Matter in Childhood, Adolescence, or Both?

It is possible that the importance of maternal time for children's outcomes depends on the age of offspring. The ideology of intensive mothering focuses on the practices of mothers of young children, especially when it comes to employment outside the home (Hays, 1996; Stone, 2007), which leads people to believe that mothers' time is more consequential for children than for adolescents. However, some research indicates that the intensive-mothering ideology extends to mothers of teenage children, making them feel responsible for shaping and guiding their children's success through heavy time investments during adolescence (Kurz, 2000; Nelson, 2010). Indeed, mother–child time may be more important in adolescence than during childhood, because adolescence may be a more stressful time than childhood (Larson & Ham, 1993; Rudolph & Hammen, 2003), rendering time spent together more beneficial or special at this stage.

What About Father Time or Parent Time?

Intensive-mothering ideology implies that mothers are unique in their powers to enhance child development (Hays, 1996), and thus a comparison to father time is imperative. Some scholars have argued that father time, because it is viewed as special (Milkie, Simon, & Powell, 1997), may represent an important boost to children relative to the more ubiquitous, normative time spent with mother (Lam, McHale, & Crouter, 2012). A handful of studies have shown that father involvement is related to better child outcomes, controlling for mother involvement (Barnes & Farrell, 1992; Kandel, 1990; Simons, Whitbeck, Beaman, & Conger, 1994; Wenk, Hardesty, Morgan, & Blair, 1994). Using data from the National Survey of Children, Harris, Furstenberg, and Marmer (1998) found that paternal involvement, but not maternal involvement, in childhood was associated with adult children's higher educational achievement, lower delinquency, and lower psychological distress. In these studies, father involvement was measured as children's or mothers' reports of the level of fathers' "involvement," "support," and "monitoring"; hence it is unclear how more precise measures of father–child time together are linked to children's outcomes. In contrast, Hofferth (2006) examined paternal time using time diary data from the PSID-CDS for children living with two parents and found that mothers', but not fathers', engagement time was negatively related to children's problems, measured as a combination of externalizing and internalizing problems, whereas it was not related to academic outcomes.

What about time with both parents? Folbre and colleagues (2005) argued that mother–father time is more beneficial to the child because it comprises time that is more "dense" with adults. Other scholars have argued that family time—that is, time spent together as a family, including parents and siblings—has positive consequences for children in part because it enhances a sense of closeness and "we-ness" (Crouter, Tucker, Head, & McHale, 2004). Again, most research has examined family time spent on specific activities rather than how much total family time children experience. Barnes and colleagues (Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell, & Dintcheff, 2007) showed that more family time—as measured by the frequency with which adolescents reported spending time in a range of family activities, such as attending family celebrations, eating meals, and going on vacations with parents—was related to fewer acts of delinquency among adolescents. Crosnoe and Trinitapoli (2008) found that more shared family activities in physical recreation and cultural events were related to adolescents' academic achievement. Crouter et al. (2004) found more family time, defined as time the focal adolescent child spent with mother, father, and a sibling engaged in any of 63 activities the researchers asked about, was related to better psychological adjustment of adolescents, albeit only for firstborn children. Thus, putting parent time in to context with mother time to examine the sacrosanctity of the latter is important.

Summary and Hypotheses

The ideology of intensive mothering insinuates that children's healthy development depends in

large part on how much time they spend with their mothers and that mothers are unique and irreplaceable, especially for young children (Hays, 1996; Liss et al., 2013). Yet there is scant empirical evidence regarding whether greater amounts of mothers' time with children, whether they are engaged in activities with children or they are simply present, is better for children's behavioral, emotional, or academic outcomes. With this study, we contribute to the literature by empirically testing widely held assumptions associated with intensive-mothering ideology with precise measures. We posed the following hypotheses:

> *Hypothesis 1:* The more time children have mothers accessible to them, the more positive their behavioral, emotional, and academic outcomes.
> *Hypothesis 2*: The more time children spend directly engaged in interaction with mothers, the more positive their behavioral, emotional, and academic outcomes.
> *Hypothesis 3*: The more time adolescents have mothers accessible to them, the more optimal their behavioral, emotional, academic, and risky behavior outcomes.
> *Hypothesis 4*: The more time adolescents spend directly engaged in interaction with mothers, the more optimal their behavioral, emotional, academic, and risky behavior outcomes.

To put maternal time with children and adolescents into context, we also assessed how social status resources were important for offspring development and how time with father and time spent jointly with mother and father ("parent time") related to child and adolescent outcomes.

Method

Data came from two waves of the PSID-CDS. The PSID is a nationally representative longitudinal survey of families the University of Michigan launched in 1968. PSID families who completed the 1997 interview were recruited into the first wave (W1) of the CDS if they had at least one child ages 0 to 13 in 1997 ($n = 3{,}563$). The second wave (W2) was collected in 2002–2003, for which 82% ($n = 2{,}907$) of children from W1 participated. Between W1 and W2, 292 children were dropped because their family was no longer eligible for and/or was not active in the main PSID data collection in 2001, and 364 children were dropped for a variety of reasons such as refusing, unable to be located, or establishing their own residence ("PSID-CDS User Guide Supplement for CDS-II," 2010). The PSID-CDS includes time diary data for one weekend day and one weekday, offering detailed time use information for all children's activities over 24-hour periods and the individuals who participated with them in these activities. For the present analysis, the W1 analytic sample (referred to as the *child sample*) consisted of children ages 3 to 11 who lived with their biological mother at W1 and completed both weekday and weekend time diaries ($N_1 = 1{,}610$). Five cases were dropped due to extreme values on mother's time with children, as discussed below. The W2 analytical sample (referred to as the *adolescent sample*) consisted of adolescents ages 12 to 18 who lived with their biological mother at both waves and completed both weekday and weekend time diaries at both waves ($N_2 = 778$). More than one child per household could be included in the sample. Between the child and adolescent samples, 565 cases were not included because they did not reach age 12 by W2, and 121 did not qualify for W2 because they no longer met other inclusion criteria, including completing both weekday and weekend diaries and living with their biological mother. In addition, 141 cases were missing in W2. Those who were missing or who did not qualify for the adolescent sample for reasons other than age eligibility were disproportionately younger, were African American, were in single-mother households, and had mothers with slightly less education. This attrition could affect results in that it truncates variation on status factors, which link to maternal time (Guryan, Hurst, & Kearney, 2008).

All analyses were cross-sectional. We examined longitudinal associations between maternal time at W1 and developmental outcomes at W2 but do not present results here. First, there were no statistically significant associations between time with mothers in childhood (W1) and adolescent outcomes (W2). Second, theoretically, maternal time should be important for the concurrent experiences and well-being of children. Existing research also indicates a lack of long-reaching influence (e.g., Hsin, 2009).

Dependent Variables: Children's and Adolescents' Developmental Outcomes

At both waves, we examined three key dimensions of children's developmental outcomes: (a) behavioral problems, (b) emotional problems, and (c) academic performance. In addition, in the adolescent sample only, we included measures of risky behaviors that prior research on U.S. adolescents typically has examined, such as substance use, delinquent behavior, and sexual activity.

Behavioral problems were measured at both waves with a mother-reported scale of children's externalizing behavior problems ($\alpha = .86$ in W1 and .86 in W2). The scale was the sum of 15 questions at W1 and 17 questions at W2 for which mothers were asked about their child's behavior, such as whether the child had ever cheated or told lies, argued too much, had difficulty concentrating, bullied or was cruel or mean to others, or was restless or overly active (1 = "not true," 2 = "sometimes true," 3 = "often true"). Questions were mostly identical between W1 and W2, with a few items modified to be more age appropriate. *Emotional problems* were measured with a mother-reported scale of internalizing behavior problems ($\alpha = .81$ in W1 and .83 in W2). The scale was the sum of 13 items from W1 and 14 items from W2. At W1, mothers were asked questions such as whether the child felt that no one loved him or her, was too fearful or anxious, was easily confused, was unhappy, was withdrawn, or was too dependent on others (0 = "not true," 1 = "sometimes true," 2 = "often true"). Questions were mostly identical between W1 and W2, with a few items modified to be more age appropriate. The behavioral problems and emotional problems scales were adapted from the Achenbach Behavior Problems Checklist from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth ("PSID-CDS User Guide Supplement for CDS-I," 2010). *Academic performance* was measured in both waves with scores from subtests of the Woodcock–Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery—Revised (Bracken & McCallum, 1993). We used the child's combined score on the Passage Comprehension and Letter–Word subtests as an indicator of reading ability, which ranged from 27 to 173 in W1 and from 13 to 162 in W2.To measure math ability, we used combined scores from the Calculations and Applied Problems subtests in 1997 (ranging from 18 to 184) and the Applied Problems subtest in W2 (ranging from 49 to 168). These tests were given only to children age 6 and older.

We examined three indicators of risk-taking behaviors for adolescents (W2). *Substance use* was assessed with a 0-to-3 index, created by summing three questions (1 = yes, 0 = no) that asked whether adolescents had ever tried cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol. *Delinquent behaviors* was a 10-item index adapted from the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, ranging from 0 to 185 ($\alpha = .65$); it measured participation in delinquent or disobedient behavior. Adolescents were asked how many times in the last 6 months they had done the following: "Stayed out later than your parent(s) said you should", "Hurt someone badly enough that he/she needed bandages or a doctor", "Lied to your parent(s) about something important", "Taken something from a store without paying for it", "Damaged school property on purpose", "Had to bring your parent(s) to school because of something you did wrong", "Skipped a day of school without permission", "Stayed out at night without permission", "Been stopped and questioned by the police", and "Been arrested by the police." *Sexual activity* was a dichotomous variable indicating whether the adolescent reported ever having had sex (1 = yes, 0 = no).

Key Independent Variables: Accessible and Engaged Time With Mother

We examined two types of time with mothers (exclusive of fathers, although others could be present) using the child's time diary data: (a) accessible time and (b) engaged time. Both types of time were defined by the social context of the reported activity, that is, with whom (e.g., mom, dad, friend, sibling) the child's activities (excluding grooming and sleep in both waves and school and work in W2) occurred. For each activity, diarists were asked, "Who was doing the activity with the child?" and "Who (else) was there but not directly involved in the activity?" We referred to all time children spent in the presence of but not directly involved with mother as *accessible time* and all time children spent participating in activities with mothers as *engaged time*. We constructed these forms of time as mutually exclusive. Children's activities were recorded in one weekday diary and one weekend diary in both waves. To arrive at weekly estimates of engaged and accessible

time, we summed the duration of all weekday and weekend activities for which a mother was reported to be doing activities with the child (for engaged time) and present but not directly involved (for accessible time) and multiplied the weekday sum by 5 and the weekend sum by 2. The weekday and weekend totals were summed to create a full week's worth of time to arrive at weekly estimates of the number of hours per week children spent either accessible to or engaged with their mother. This technique has been used in previous studies using PSID-CDS and other data sets (Bianchi et al., 2006; Hofferth, 2006). We excluded five extreme cases, in which reports indicated children spending more hours of engaged or accessible time with mother than an average child's waking hours per week, which was 112 hours according to our calculations (16 hours of waking time × 7 days = 112 hours in a waking week).

We examined mother time exclusive of father's presence; that is, we assessed the time that children spent with their mothers exclusively when their fathers were not around or participating. We used *exclusive* mother time because intensive-mothering ideology emphasizes the sacredness of maternal time. This also made it easier to interpret the results with no father engagement or presence contaminating "mother time." We conducted analyses using *inclusive* mother time—time spent with mother during which fathers could also be present or participating—and the results were similar to what we call parent time, below (results available on request).

Time Comparisons: Father Time and Parent Time

For comparative purposes, we examined the associations between *father* time and offspring development and between *parent* time—(time with mother and father)—and outcomes. Father time was measured in the same way as mother time was measured above (i.e., father engaged or accessible time without mother's engagement or accessibility). Parent time included two variables: (a) engaged time with mother and father, where children's diaries indicated both their mother and father were participating in an activity with them, and (b) accessible time with mother and father, when both mother and father were present but neither was directly involved in activities with the child. The mutually exclusive versions of engaged mother and parent time were correlated with each other at $\rho = -.25$ ($p < .001$) in the child sample and $\rho = -.14$ ($p < .001$) in the adolescent sample. Similarly, the correlations between accessible mother and parent time were $-.23$ ($p < .001$) in the child sample and $-.18$ ($p < .001$) in the adolescent sample.

Social Status Resources

Three measures were included as social status resources. *Mother's education* was measured in years, ranging from 0 to 17, where 0 to 16 represented mother's number of years of schooling and 17 indicated "at least some postgraduate work." *Family income* was a continuous variable, ranging from $0 to $350,000 at W1 and $2,400 to $256,500 at W2. We top-coded family income at the 95th percentile, and the log of family income was used in the regression analysis. *Family structure* was measured with three dichotomous variables: (a) two-biological-parent, (b) single-mother, or (c) mother–stepfather families.

Control Variables

Our analysis included several controls. *Child's age* was measured in years. *Child's gender* was a dummy variable (1 = female, 0 = male). Three dummy variables were constructed to measure *child's race/ethnicity*, including non-Hispanic White (reference), non-Hispanic Black, and Other. *Mother's work hours* was a continuous variable based on her reported total weekly work hours at all jobs in the previous year. The extreme values were top-coded at the 95th percentile. *Mother's age* was measured in years. *Mother's psychological distress* was measured with the K-6 Non-Specific Psychological Distress Scale developed by Ronald Kessler at Harvard Medical School (*PSID-CDS User Guide Supplement for CDS-I*, 2010). Mothers were asked in the previous 4 weeks how often they had felt nervous, hopeless, or restless, that everything was an effort, so sad that nothing could cheer them up, and worthless (0 = *none of the time* to 4 = *all of the time*). *Number of children* in the household was a continuous variable. Finally, we controlled for two kinds of time diary characteristics. The *typicality of the diary days* was measured by a question that asked how typical the weekday or weekend diary day was for that day of the week (1 = *not at all typical* to

5 = *very typical*). *Who completed the weekday diary* was coded with four dummy variables: (a) mother alone (reference), (b) mother and child together, (c) child alone, and (d) someone else. Descriptive statistics for all variables in the analysis for the child and adolescent samples are provided in Table 1.

Analytic Approach

To examine how the amount of time children and adolescents spent with mothers related to the outcome measures, controlling for social status resources and other demographic and time diary characteristics, we used ordinary least squares regression models or logistic regression models depending on the outcome measures. We examined engaged and accessible time separately for each outcome. We used the same analytic procedure to examine the relationship between both father time and parent time and developmental outcomes.

Most variables had a small percentage of missing values with the exception that 29% of values on mother's psychological distress in W1 were missing. We imputed missing data using a multiple-imputation procedure with all variables in the analysis as suggested by Allison (2001). We used the *ice* command in Stata with five imputed data sets, then used the *mibeta* command to pool and standardize the estimates from each data set into a single set of ordinary least squares regression results (Royston, 2005). R-squared calculations were based on Fisher's z transformation using the *fisherz* command in Stata. For the logistic regression models, we used the *mi* estimate command with no Fisher's z transformation, showing, instead, the average of the five pseudo-R^2 statistics reported in the individual imputed data sets.

The PSID oversampled lower income households. Population weights provided by the PSID-CDS adjust for the oversampling in the PSID, for probability of selection into the CDS, and for attrition. All analyses in the present analysis were weighted. The PSID-CDS collected data on siblings within the same household. In the child sample, 460 cases had no sibling in the sample, and in the adolescent sample 270 cases had no sibling in the sample. The nonindependence sampling design required a statistical correction to account for standard error inflation. Thus, all models used Stata's *cluster* command to account for the sampling design, and we present unstandardized coefficients

Results

Does the amount of time children spend with their mothers matter for children's behavioral, emotional, and academic outcomes? The results from ordinary least squares regression models for the child sample are shown in Table 2. There were no statistically significant associations between maternal time of either type and any child outcome. In contrast, social status resources, as measured by mother's education, family income, and family structure, was related to some outcomes. Mother's education was positively associated with children's performance in reading and math, and family income was positively associated with children's math performance. Compared to living with married biological parents, children living in stepfamilies had more behavioral problems, and children living in single-mother households had more emotional problems. We examined statistical power for our models and found ample power for detecting true effects in the data, if they existed. For example, for the model examining the association between maternal engaged time and children's externalizing problems, we assumed that maternal engaged time with 17 other variables would exhibit a small effect size as defined by Liu (2014), which is a partial R^2 of .0196. With the sample size of 1,605, we found power greater than .999 ($p < .05$).

The results of the same analysis for adolescents are reported in Table 3. Again, there were no statistically significant associations between the amount of either type of maternal time and adolescents' behavioral, emotional, or academic outcomes. Once again, social status resources were more strongly related to adolescent well-being than time. Mother's education was significantly positively associated with adolescents' performance in reading and math. Living in stepfamily or single-mother households was associated with more behavioral problems for adolescents than was living with married biological parents.

The results in Table 4 show how maternal time was related to risky behavior in adolescence. Engaged mother time was negatively related to one of the three behaviors; specifically, engaged time with mother was negatively related to adolescents' delinquent behavior ($b = -0.17$,

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for the Variables in the Analyses*

	Child sample (*N* = 1,605)			Adolescent sample (*N* = 778)		
	M	*SD*	Range	*M*	*SD*	Range
Dependent variables						
Externalizing problems	5.55	3.72	0–15	5.37	4.14	0–17
Internalizing problems	2.46	2.49	0–13	3.09	3.17	0–14
Reading score[a]	105.23	17.69	27–173	102.37	20.72	0–194
Math score[a]	105.23	19.15	13–162	102.70	16.72	49–168
Substance use[b]				.88	1.04	0–3
Delinquent behavior[b]				6.98	14.01	0–185
Sex[b]				.24	.43	0–1
Time with mother						
Accessible mother time	12.85	11.39	0–77.67	8.13	10.73	0–61.67
Engaged mother time	13.28	12.46	0–86.00	7.50	9.50	0–51.75
Time with father						
Accessible father time	2.14	4.94	0–47.83	1.37	4.59	0–42.33
Engaged father time	3.08	5.99	0–51.17	2.23	4.95	0–41.75
Time with mother and father						
Accessible parent time	6.65	7.89	0–55.67	8.24	11.58	0–67.67
Engaged parent time	7.72	7.95	0–54.50	5.98	9.56	0–88.5
Social status resources						
Mother education	12.91	2.79	0–17	12.94	2.56	0–17
Family income (in $1,000s)	52.36	43.02	0–305.00	76.17	53.77	2.4–257.00
Family structure						
Married biological parents	.75	.43	0–1	.68	.42	0–1
Single mother	.19	.40	0–1	.22	.42	0–1
Stepfamily	.06	.23	0–1	.10	.30	0–1
Controls						
Child age	7.51	2.56	3–11.9	14.79	1.61	12–18
Child gender (female = 1)	.49	.50	0–1	.49	.50	0–1
Child race						
White	.68	.47	0–1	.53	.50	0–1
African American	.15	.35	0–1	.36	.48	0–1
Other	.17	0.38	0–1	.11	.31	0–1
Mother weekly work hours	25.55	18.17	0–50	29.68	18.98	0–60
Mother age	34.80	5.95	17–58	40.41	5.55	26–57
Mother's generalized distress	3.49	3.33	0–21	4.01	3.68	0–24
No. children in household	2.43	1.06	1–9	2.23	.99	1–8
Diary characteristics						
Typicality of weekday diary	4.02	1.19	1–5	3.79	1.32	1–5
Typicality of weekend diary	3.63	1.23	1–5	3.52	1.24	1–5
Who completed the diary						
Mom alone	.70	.46	0–1	.19	.39	0–1
Mom and child together	.12	.33	0–1	.24	.43	0–1
Child alone	.06	.23	0–1	.56	.50	0–1
Other	.12	.32	0–1	.01	.09	0–1

Note: Percentages and means are weighted. [a]Collected only for children age 6 and older (*N* = 1,069). [b]Asked of adolescents age 12 and older.

Table 2. *Children's Outcome Variables Regressed on Time With Mother, Social Status Resources, Demographic Controls, and Diary Characteristics: Child Sample, Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement*

	Externalizing problems ($n = 1,605$)				Internalizing problems ($n = 1,605$)				Reading score[a] ($n = 1,069$)				Math score[a] ($n = 1,069$)			
Predictor	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*
Time with mother																
Accessible time	−0.01	0.01			0.00	0.01			0.03	0.06			−0.01	0.06		
Engaged time			0.00	0.01			−0.01	0.01			0.00	0.09			−0.04	0.08
Social status resources																
Mother education	−0.04	0.06	−0.04	0.06	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.03	1.14	0.37***	1.14	0.37**	1.62	0.41***	1.62	0.41***
Log of family income	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.17	−0.12	0.10	−0.12	0.10	2.18	1.18	2.17	1.18	2.62	1.23*	2.62	1.23*
Family structure[b]																
Single mother	1.30	0.41**	1.29	0.41**	0.62	0.26*	0.65	0.26*	1.71	2.99	1.89	3.02	1.01	2.69	1.23	2.75
Stepfamily	0.99	0.46*	0.99	0.46*	0.35	0.31	0.35	0.31	−4.58	2.44	−4.57	2.44	−1.98	2.46	−1.96	2.47
Controls																
Child age	−0.08	0.06	−0.08	0.05	0.25	0.04***	0.25	0.04***	0.15	0.55	0.14	0.55	0.19	0.44	0.17	0.45
Child gender[b]	−1.14	0.23***	−1.13	0.24***	−0.24	0.15	−0.22	0.15	2.18	1.50	2.14	1.51	−2.45	1.49	−2.38	1.49
Child race[b]																
African American	−0.79	0.34*	−0.79	0.34*	−0.86	0.19***	−0.86	0.19***	−6.72	2.30**	−6.71	2.31**	−4.64	2.22*	−4.62	2.21*
Other	−0.47	0.40	−0.46	0.41	−0.14	0.22	−0.13	0.22	1.00	2.96	0.95	2.97	−0.77	2.97	−0.67	2.94
Mother work hours	−0.01	0.01	−0.01	0.01	−0.01	0.00	−0.01	0.00	−0.09	0.04*	−0.09	0.04*	−0.07	0.04	−0.07	0.04
Mother age	−0.06	0.02*	−0.06	0.02*	−0.02	0.02	−0.02	0.01	0.23	0.14	0.24	0.14	0.23	0.14	0.24	0.14
Mother distress	0.33	0.04***	0.33	0.04***	0.22	0.03***	0.22	0.03***	−0.33	0.22	−0.34	0.22	−0.73	0.20**	−0.73	0.20**
No. children in home	−0.03	0.12	−0.04	0.12	−0.13	0.07	−0.14	0.07*	−2.05	0.72**	−2.05	0.73**	−0.31	0.73	−0.38	0.74
Diary characteristics																
Typicality of weekday	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.10	−0.01	0.07	−0.01	0.07	−0.47	0.61	−0.48	0.60	−0.02	0.63	−0.05	0.62
Typicality of weekend	−0.06	0.10	−0.06	0.10	−0.07	0.07	−0.07	0.07	0.41	0.63	0.43	0.63	−0.06	0.65	−0.07	0.65
Who completed diary[b]																
Mom and child	−0.59	0.33	−0.60	0.33	−0.18	0.26	−0.18	0.26	3.37	1.88	3.39	1.87	5.63	1.84**	5.59	1.82**
Child alone	−0.21	0.54	−0.21	0.53	−0.38	0.36	−0.39	0.35	2.02	2.70	1.97	2.70	3.61	2.93	3.51	2.92
Other	0.15	0.40	0.15	0.40	0.23	0.26	0.21	0.27	−2.78	2.55	−2.81	2.55	−5.13	2.36*	−5.21	2.35*
Intercept	8.94	1.84***	8.91	1.83***	2.96	1.12***	3.07	1.12***	67.86	12.31***	68.50	13.22***	55.76	13.26***	56.24	13.51***
R^2	.17***		.17***		.18***		.18***		.18***		.19***		.23***		.23***	

[a]Children ages 6 to 11 only. [b]Omitted reference groups are two-biological-parent families, boys, White, and mother alone. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

Table 3. *Adolescents' Outcome Variables Regressed Onto Time With Mother, Social Status Resources, Demographic Controls, and Diary Characteristics: Adolescent Sample, Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement*

	Externalizing problems ($n = 778$)				Internalizing problems ($n = 778$)				Reading score ($n = 778$)				Math score ($n = 778$)			
Predictor	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*
Time with mother																
Accessible time	−0.03	0.02			0.01	0.02			−0.02	0.10			−0.07	0.08		
Engaged time			−0.02	0.02			0.00	0.02			−0.03	0.10			−0.08	0.07
Social status resources																
Mother education	0.13	0.09	0.12	0.09	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.08	1.82	0.41***	1.82	0.41***	1.80	0.33***	1.78	0.33***
Log of family income	−0.31	0.35	−0.35	0.35	−0.28	0.29	−0.27	0.29	1.03	1.42	0.99	1.43	0.89	1.48	0.79	1.49
Family structure[a]																
Single mother	1.24	0.76	1.04	0.79	0.44	0.58	0.53	0.58	6.17	3.70	6.24	3.81	5.29	2.80	5.13	2.68
Stepfamily	2.05	0.77**	2.01	0.77**	0.91	0.64	0.92	0.64	−4.12	3.06	−4.15	3.06	−3.70	2.36	−3.81	2.37
Controls																
Child age	−0.19	0.11	−0.19	0.11	0.01	0.09	0.00	0.09	−0.77	0.61	−0.78	0.60	−1.82	0.45***	−1.83	0.44***
Child gender[a]	−0.90	0.36*	−0.85	0.36*	0.32	0.30	0.32	0.30	2.93	1.88	3.04	1.90	−3.95	1.36**	−3.70	1.41*
Child race[a]																
African American	0.30	0.62	0.21	0.63	−0.74	0.46	−0.73	0.46	−15.15	3.15***	−15.24	3.12***	−12.35	1.98***	−12.63	2.01***
Other	0.49	0.57	0.51	0.57	0.51	0.48	0.49	0.49	−1.15	3.30	−1.20	3.32	−1.56	2.49	−1.63	2.55
Mother work hours	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	−0.07	0.05	−0.07	0.05	−0.09	0.04*	−0.09	0.04*
Mother age	−0.06	0.04	−0.06	0.04	−0.03	0.03	−0.03	0.03	0.25	0.21	0.25	0.21	0.28	0.15	0.28	0.15
Mother distress	0.29	0.05***	0.29	0.05***	0.27	0.05***	0.27	0.05***	−0.56	0.27*	−0.57	0.27*	−0.52	0.21*	−0.54	0.21*
No. children in home	0.08	0.21	0.06	0.21	0.06	0.17	0.06	0.17	−0.45	0.95	−0.48	0.97	−0.45	0.86	−0.53	0.87
Diary characteristics																
Typicality of weekday	−0.07	0.14	−0.07	0.14	0.05	0.11	0.05	0.11	−0.05	0.74	−0.05	0.74	0.50	0.56	0.51	0.57
Typicality of weekend	−0.10	0.17	−0.10	0.17	−0.28	0.14*	−0.28	0.14*	−0.19	0.72	−0.20	0.72	−0.37	0.69	−0.39	0.70
Who completed diary[a]																
Mom and child	−0.79	0.59	−0.76	0.58	−0.56	0.44	−0.57	0.44	0.79	2.98	0.78	3.02	3.57	2.03	3.59	2.07
Child alone	−0.51	0.54	−0.53	0.54	−0.85	0.41*	−0.86	0.41*	5.13	3.33	5.04	3.37	5.55	2.01**	5.38	2.05**
Other	−0.37	1.55	−0.34	1.54	−1.27	0.95	−1.31	0.96	3.30	5.94	3.20	5.94	2.60	4.71	2.48	4.63
Intercept	12.51	4.13**	12.80	4.19**	6.62	3.35*	6.71	3.37*	75.39	19.57***	76.32	20.28***	92.89	17.14***	94.85	17.34***
R^2	.16***		.16***		.15***		.15***		.23***		.23***		.32***		.32***	

[a]Omitted reference groups are two-biological-parent families, boys, White, and mother alone. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

Table 4. *Risky Behavior Variables Regressed Onto Time With Mother, Social Status Resources, Demographic Controls, and Diary Characteristics: Adolescent Sample, Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement*

	Substance use ($n = 778$)				Delinquent behavior ($n = 778$)				Sex[a] ($n = 778$)			
Predictor	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*
Time with mother												
Accessible time with mother	0.00	0.00			−0.06	0.08			−0.03	0.02		
Engaged time with mother			−0.01	0.01			−0.17	0.06**			−0.03	0.02
Social status resources												
Mother education	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.23	0.37	0.19	0.37	−0.01	0.08	−0.01	0.08
Log of family income	−0.19	0.13	−0.20	0.13	−1.66	1.23	−1.82	1.26	−0.68	0.32*	−0.73	0.32*
Family structure[b]												
Single-mother family	0.24	0.19	0.24	0.19	4.80	2.78	5.35	2.62*	−0.06	0.51	−0.10	0.52
Stepfamily	0.39	0.21	0.38	0.21	2.53	2.35	2.42	2.33	0.31	0.54	0.30	0.53
Controls												
Child age	0.22	0.03***	0.22	0.03***	1.24	0.45**	1.19	0.45*	0.71	0.11***	0.72	0.11***
Child gender[b]	−0.04	0.09	−0.02	0.09	−2.37	1.25	−1.81	1.21	−0.01	0.29	0.05	0.29
Child race[b]												
African American	−0.26	0.13*	−0.27	0.13*	−1.92	1.81	−2.34	1.87	0.81	0.37*	0.67	0.37
Other	0.04	0.17	0.04	0.17	4.49	2.70	4.18	2.71	0.44	0.48	0.42	0.48
Mother work hours	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	−0.03	0.03	−0.03	0.03	−0.02	0.01	−0.02	0.01
Mother age	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	−0.03	0.14	−0.04	0.14	−0.04	0.04	−0.04	0.04
Mother distress	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.44	0.24	0.40	0.24	−0.03	0.05	−0.04	0.05
No. children in household	0.02	0.06	0.01	0.06	0.32	0.78	0.16	0.77	−0.41	0.16*	−0.44	0.16*
Diary characteristics												
Typicality of weekday diary	−0.02	0.03	−0.02	0.03	−0.54	0.51	−0.53	0.51	−0.06	0.10	−0.05	0.10
Typicality of weekend diary	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.16	0.64	0.12	0.63	0.01	0.12	−0.01	0.12
Who completed diary[b]												
Mom and child	−0.22	0.14	−0.22	0.14	2.01	1.55	1.94	1.58	−0.74	0.59	−0.69	0.56
Child alone	−0.16	0.14	−0.17	0.15	1.27	1.39	0.81	1.38	−0.08	0.45	−0.10	0.44
Other	0.93	0.58	0.92	0.58	18.16	11.00	17.61	10.80	1.41	1.11	1.49	1.12
Intercept	−0.65	1.22	−0.52	1.22	4.09	13.35	8.95	13.63	−1.56	3.70	−1.09	3.67
R^2	.19***		.19***		.12***		.13***		.24***		.24***	

[a]Coefficients are based on logit regression. [b]Omitted reference groups are two-biological-parent families, boys, White, and mother alone. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

$p < .01$). The effect size for this association was 0.01, which is very small according to Cohen (1988).

Overall, we found that the quantity of time spent with mothers—both time accessible to children and time spent engaged with them—was not associated with the well-being of children ages 3 to 11 or for the behavioral health, emotional health, or academic performance of adolescents. We did, however, find evidence that mothers' time in activities with adolescents was connected to teens' engagement in one form of risky behavior.

Considering Father Time, Parent Time, and Offspring Development

We next present results from analyses that show how time with father (without mother) and time with mother and father together (parent time) related to offspring development. Table 5 contains a summary of the findings showing only main effect coefficients from the full models that include all control variables (results available on request). We found no statistically significant relationships between more father time or parent time and positive offspring outcomes in

Table 5. *Summary Table of Child and Adolescent Outcome Variables Regressed Onto Mother Time, Father Time, and Family Time, Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement*

	Child sample				Adolescent sample						
Predictor	Extern. problems ($n = 1{,}605$)	Intern. problems ($n = 1{,}605$)	Reading score ($n = 1{,}069$)	Math score ($n = 1{,}069$)	Extern. problems ($n = 778$)	Intern. problems ($n = 778$)	Reading score ($n = 778$)	Math score ($n = 778$)	Substance use ($n = 778$)	Delinquent behavior ($n = 778$)	Sex ($n = 778$)
Mother time											
Accessible time with mother	−0.01	0.00	0.03	−0.01	−0.03	0.01	−0.02	−0.07	0.00	−0.06	−0.03
Engaged time with mother	0.00	−0.01	0.00	−0.04	−0.02	0.00	−0.03	−0.08	0.00	−0.17**	−0.03
Father time											
Accessible time with father	−0.01	−0.01	−0.42*	−0.39*	0.03	0.02	−0.23	−0.18	0.00	0.02	−0.02
Engaged time with father	−0.03	−0.01	−0.02	0.06	0.05	0.01	−0.22	0.16	0.01	0.02	0.02
Parental time											
Accessible time with mother and father	0.00	0.01	0.12	0.05	−0.02	−0.01	0.10	0.01	−0.01**	0.05	−0.02
Engaged time with mother and father	−0.02	−0.01	−0.02	−0.05	−0.04**	−0.02	0.06	0.14*	−0.01*	−0.10*	−0.02

Note: Coefficients come from full models with all controls. Extern. = externalizing; Intern. = internalizing. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

the child sample (left-hand side of the table). As with mother time, social status resources remain strongly related to children's optimal outcomes (results not shown). Parent time, however, was related to several outcomes in adolescence. Time spent engaged with both parents was associated with fewer behavioral problems, better performance in math, less substance use, and less delinquent behavior. Time spent with both parents accessible to adolescents was associated with less substance use.

In all, consistent with results from the maternal time analysis, the amount of time with father was not related to children's optimal behavioral, emotional, or academic outcomes. The amount of time with both parents was linked to adolescent outcomes across several spheres, whereas mothers' time with adolescents (with fathers not present) was linked to delinquent behavior only. Thus, the importance of mothers' time with adolescents was more robust across several aspects of adolescents' developmental outcomes when they were together with fathers.

Given the associations between social status resources and children's and adolescents' outcomes shown in Tables 2 and 3, respectively, we examined interaction analyses (data not shown) to see whether the relationship between time with mother and children's/adolescents' development varied by social status resources. We found very minimal support for the idea that maternal time mattered differently across status.

Discussion

Questions as to how the amount of time mothers spend with their children matters for their offspring are fraught with tension. As part of political ideology and the Mommy Wars, how much time mothers spend with children and should spend with them is hotly contested terrain. The ideology of intensive mothering, which has been prominent in U.S. culture over recent decades, underscores the idea that mothers are unique and their time irreplaceable for children. Yet, in part because precise measures of the total amount of time children spend with mothers have been difficult to obtain, a careful empirical examination of how the direct amount of mothers' time with children relates to offspring development has been an important void in the literature.

Our findings are perhaps surprising. We showed that, overall, the amount of maternal time with children ages 3 to 11 did not matter

across key domains. Over several aspects of children's lives, the sheer amount of exclusive maternal time, whether directly engaged with children or simply being there, had relatively little power, with no support for hypotheses generated from assumptions about intensive mothering. In adolescence we found just a small amount of support for Hypothesis 4: the link between mothers' time engaged with offspring and delinquent behaviors, though even there the effect size was very small. Bolstering the importance of mother time in adolescence versus childhood is our observation that mothers' time was important to adolescents when mothers were together with fathers, but this was not apparent during childhood.

Teens' time spent in activities with their mothers may be important to avoiding risk-taking behaviors such as delinquency in several ways: through blocking opportunities, encouraging more prosocial thinking and actions during their time together, or as a signal to adolescents that mothers find them worthy of sustained attention. Perhaps time with mothers increases adolescents' sense that they matter (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981), and youth are less willing to take risks that they realize may not only hurt themselves but also fray their bond with their parents. Our analysis showed that parent time—time spent with mother and father jointly—was related to adolescent well-being too. Thus, life stage matters. It could be that maternal time is more beneficial in adolescence than in young adulthood also. Recent scholarship on college students has shown that parents' overinvolvement (helicoptering) relates to worse psychological well-being or ineffective coping skills of children (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013) through dampening a sense of autonomy or competence (Schiffrin et al., 2014); however, evidence may be mixed when broader samples or young adults older than college age are considered (Fingerman et al., 2012).

"Being there" versus doing activities together with offspring is important to consider. In a study by Barnes and Farrell (1992), maternal monitoring (though not time) was negatively related to adolescents' risk-taking behavior. Qualitative studies have documented that mothers with teenage children today feel the increasing need to monitor children (Nelson, 2010), believing that if they are at home after school, it will prevent their children from getting involved in drugs, sexual activities, or with delinquent friends (Kurz, 2000, 2006). Yet the present analysis, with precise measures of focused interactions with adolescents versus "being there," shows that the former had more power, and that only when both parents were accessible was the mother (really, both mother and father) efficacious for any outcome. It is notable that accessibility to adolescents was operationalized as being present physically in this study, but with the recent dramatic changes in technologies families use such as cell phones, accessibility may be taking on new forms (Nelson, 2010). The importance of physical versus electronic accessibility is a key avenue for further research.

It is ironic that most of the cultural pressures on mothers center on mothers' presence and interactions with younger children, with less attention to adolescents, when adolescence may be the key stage in terms of the influence of time with parents (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Furthermore, the maternal employment literature, with many studies coming up empty-handed when focused on how (assumed) time away is detrimental to children (Bianchi, 2000), rarely focuses on adolescents, with some exceptions (e.g., Muller, 1995). Our analysis showed that maternal work hours were negatively related to adolescents' math scores, a pattern that is partially consistent with Muller's (1995) findings.

There are limitations to this study. First, issues of causality are always paramount. We are cautious in the articulation of causality in the few connections we did find between time and developmental outcomes. For example, mothers' time engaged with adolescents was negatively related to delinquent activity. This could mean that the amount of this form of time with mothers dampens teens' proclivity to engage in deviant acts. Alternatively, it could mean that adolescents who are unlikely to steal, lie, or get in trouble at school or with the law are available to spend more time engaged with mothers, and mothers too may want to be engaged with this kind of teen more often. However, our findings (for the child sample) are, in a sense, "non-findings"; that is, there was no association between greater quantities of maternal time and children's development as examined here. Therefore, causality issues are muted to some degree. There is an important case to consider, however, in our non-findings. We cannot measure the possibility that mothers who spend more time with children could be negatively

selected into being with them more often. For example, unobserved factors of mothers may keep them from engaging in work or social activities and thus make them more available for spending time with their children; these same factors may exert a less-than-positive influence on offspring (e.g., Chase-Lansdale et al., 2003; McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, & Borquez, 1994), which may be driving the observed null results.

It is important to underscore what this study does *not* say about mothers' time and how it may be important, especially for children ages 3 to 11. First, although we examined engaged time, in which children and mothers were interacting with each other, we did not focus on *quality time*—the amount of time in particular quality activities with children, such as reading or eating meals together versus watching TV or cleaning with them—neither did we assess the quality or tone of mothers' interaction with children, such as warmth, sensitivity, or focus. These may be more important than the sheer amount of time mothers spend with children (Galinsky, 1999; Huston & Aronson, 2005; Offer, 2013). However, in additional supplemental analyses (data not shown), we did not find that more time with warmer mothers was better for children's or adolescents' outcomes. Third, time diaries cannot easily measure mothers' organizing of children's lives. Mothers access social networks to gain resources for children, plan and organize children's lives, and intervene in institutions (Lareau, 2003), which is time not necessarily spent in offspring's presence or interacting with them yet an investment that may be quite important to children's success (Budig & Folbre, 2004; Lareau, 2003). Thus, this is not the definitive study that trumpets "Mothers Do Not Matter for Children": It is clear that mothers' practices matter in myriad ways. But given the findings here, it is incumbent upon other researchers to show how and why the amount of mother time does matter for children.

In sum, this study upends the ideology of intensive mothering and points to three key areas of concern for the development of the next generation. First, it suggests that mothers ease up on practicing more intensive mothering during childhood, especially given that it may end up exhausting them (B. Fox, 2009; Rizzo et al., 2013; Wall, 2010). Second, this study suggests that the focus on time spent with children may be somewhat misplaced; adolescents, in fact, may need interactions with mothers and with both parents together to protect them and optimize their future. Finally, this study questions conventional wisdom about what is important for children's well-being, with our findings underscoring the critical importance of economic and social resources and thus the urgency in supporting mothers and families in these ways.

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